

An Essay
on
Constitutive Medicine,
Respectfully Submitted
To the Faculty
Of the Homoeopathic Medical College,
of Pennsylvania;
On the Thirty first day of January,
One Thousand eight hundred and fifty-three.
By
Alfred Hughes,
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Constitute Medicine

There is no science of more importance to mankind, than that of a true system of medicine.

It is in truth to the body, what true religion is to the soul.

When the mind is sick - when the soul is suffering under spiritual disease - when all the good affections of the heart are languishing and fast falling & perishing, and the best feelings of our nature becoming depressed and withered, then it is that the worthy and skillful hand of a good and true spiritual adviser, or physician, may restore the almost entire and irreparable derangement, and bring to life and reanimate with healthy action the machinery of our being.

Consuetudo Medicinae.

There is no science of more importance to mankind, than that of a true system of medicine.

It is in truth to the body, what true religion is to the soul.

When the mind is sick - when the soul is sorrowing under spiritual disease - when all the good affections of the heart are languishing and fast falling to perdition, and the best feelings of our nature becoming depressed and vitiated, then it is that the worthy and skilful hand of a good and true spiritual adviser, or physician, may restore the almost utter and ~~irreparable~~ derangement, and bring to life and recuperate into healthy action the machinery of our being.

But ah! how fatal ends the scene, how
 mournful comes the close - and most certainly
 and surely - if, instead of an efficient, able
 and competent and true physician, with a
true system of religion, there is brought in
 one who brings with him death and
 destruction.

And thus it is with the physician of the
 diseased body.

It is mournful, indeed, to contemplate
 how many persons, who, aside from every
 other consideration, are so utterly unfit for
 the study and practice of medicine.

Many, very many students are admitted
 to our various medical colleges, who have
 not received even the common rudiments of an
 ordinary English education; who, when even
attempting to take notes of lectures, make

a most hideous scroll, as if some poor little fly, picked up, half drowned, by some humane hand, from an inkstand, had set it upon some paper and it had drawn its ink length along, tracing some unintelligible hieroglyphics, beyond the ken of mortal man to know.

This, however, would not be so bad; but worse by far still is he whose orthography and etymology would cause Webster and Lind Murray to blush for the art they had given to mankind to teach them how to write and spell correctly.

And then again, alas! how many, who never attend medical colleges, do we see enter a physician's office, and take upon himself the study of a science, than which there is none of more immediate importance to the human family.

Totally unfit and disqualified through a want of proper preliminary education - for, in order to become fit for any of the learned professions, years of close application and intense study in the various branches of a scholastic or collegiate course, are necessary - He goes forth into the world, instead of curing and healing, to murder and kill.

It requires, in my opinion, not only a good ordinary English education to qualify oneself for any of the learned professions, a knowledge also of the languages; at least, in medicine, an acquaintance with Latin; and still better if also a knowledge of the Greek.

At least some knowledge of these, should precede a student's entry upon the arduous and responsible study of the great healing art.

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Though a knowledge of the dead languages
may not be essentially necessary for an effici-
-ent acquaintance with the science of medicine;
yet ~~their~~ acquisition renders a physician
more capable of excelling - omnes peritus
equitus - in the art; and consequently, of
making himself more useful to mankind.
And besides, instead of spending time in learn-
ing and remembering technicalities, he is
enabled to devote that time to the more
immediate study of the art itself.

And then not only that, but such pro-
-per study and mental training, enlarges
and expands the susceptibility of the
mind, and enables it to drink more deeply
of the fountain spring, and ^{not} be intoxicated
with a few shallow draughts.

And we are told

A little learning is a dangerous thing,
 Drink deep or taste not the Pierian Spring;
 There shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,
 And drinking largely sobers us again.

It is true there may be exceptions to the above remarks; for some persons have attained at great, very great eminence in the learned professions, and yet never knew a word of the classics; and received, too, but a limited education.

But the exceptions are rare, indeed; and to how much - how very much greater eminence might they not have attained, if such persons had received a thorough and complete education, both ordinary and classically, which would have conducted them much higher in the temple of fame, and rendered them a thousand fold more

useful, and reflected a far greater halo
of glory and renown around the corona of
that very usefulness and greatness.

I therefore think that no physician
should admit a student to his office,
without knowing him possessed of a good
and substantial preliminary education.

And thus in time would the world get
freed from the almost countless number
of disqualified and incompetent persons
who set themselves up as doctores medici,
trifle with human life and send many
an unfortunate being to an untimely grave.

It seems to me there is not sufficient
interest felt upon this great, important
and momentous subject; for how often
do we see persons of scarce ordinary
abilities and most inferior mental attain